

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Astley Farm, Alveley, Shropshire: High Voltage cable and substations**

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment



By

Adrian Hadley

Report No. 1356



Archaeology Wales Limited,  
Rhos Helyg, Cwm Belan,  
Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6QF  
Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371  
E-mail: admin@arch-wales.co.uk

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Prepared For: Stratus Environmental Ltd

Edited by: Mark Houliston  
Signed: *Mark Houliston*  
Position: Managing Director  
Date: 26/6/15

Authorised by: Mark Houliston  
Signed: *Mark Houliston*  
Position: Managing Director  
Date: 27/6/15

By  
Adrian Hadley

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Archaeology Wales Limited,  
Rhos Helyg, Cwm Belan,  
Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6QF  
Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371  
E-mail: admin@arch-wales.co.uk

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Archaeology Wales have been commissioned by Stratus Environmental Ltd to carry out an archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and site walkover to assess the physical impact of a high voltage cable route upon potential archaeological remains and also to assess the visual impact of a substation compound on heritage assets in the surrounding landscape. This work is to be undertaken as part of a wider development for a solar park at Astley Farm, Six Ashes, Bridgnorth. A separate archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared for the solar park development (Holderness & Hadley 2015).*

*No further archaeological sites were identified as a result of the desk-based research undertaken or during the site visit. Overall, the archaeological record indicates there is a low potential for archaeological features and deposits along the route of the proposed high voltage cable, although there is a possibility that remains of medieval activity could be encountered in the vicinity of Astley Farm.*

*No designated historic landscape areas, listed buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments lie within the bounds of the proposed development. One Grade II listed building is located within the search area. The visual impact on this extended setting of this designated asset has been determined to be negligible. The proposed location of the substation compound, set within a former quarry, will substantially the substation from potential views from other historic buildings in Birdsgreen hamlet and generally screens the development from the wider historic landscape.*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Location and Scope of Work**

Archaeology Wales (AW) have been commissioned by Stratus Environmental Ltd, to carry out an archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and site walkover for a proposed high-voltage cable and a substation associated with a solar park (Figs.1&2) at Astley Farm, Six Ashes, Bridgnorth, WV15 6ER (henceforth – the site). Information relating to the development has been supplied by Stratus Environmental Ltd.

The proposed development comprises plans for 1.27km of trenching from the solar park to the substation. The required trenching will be 400mm wide and some 1330mm deep. The proposed substation and metering rooms are to be built within a disused gravel pit along the southern side of Batfield Lane. The scheme drawings are shown on Fig.2. The compound for the DNO substation and metering rooms will measure approximately 8m by 22m. The building/s will be 16m long and 4m in width. The structure/s will have a maximum height of 3.5m.

The proposed development is to be undertaken as part of a wider development for a solar park at Astley Farm, Six Ashes, Bridgnorth. A separate archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared for the solar park development (Holderness & Hadley 2015).

The local planning authority is Shropshire Council (henceforth – SC). The archaeological assessment is being carried out pre-planning. The work is intended to provide appropriate information related to any future application, to inform the Historic Environment Team – Shropshire Council in its capacity as archaeological adviser to SC.

## **1.2 Topography**

The application area is situated near Birdsgreen hamlet, to the north-east of Alveley village. Alveley is located approximately 9km south-south-east of Bridgnorth and some 10km north-north-west of Kidderminster.

The scheme route extends from the proposed solar park at Astley Farm, at NGR 378370 285800, extending westwards, passing to the north of Astley Farm buildings, towards a proposed substation on the southern side of Batfield Lane, at NGR 377345 285555.

Astley Farmhouse and farm buildings are positioned on a slight promontory, at approximately 150m OD; the land falls comparatively sharply to south-east and south-west. Along the scheme route to the north-east of the farm, the land falls by some 20m to the proposed connection point of the cable along the northern perimeter of the solar park. Along the western scheme route the land falls from 150m OD near the farm buildings, to approximately 120-125m OD at the site of the proposed substation.

## **1.3 Mapped Geology**

The bedrock geology as mapped by the British Geological Survey (1:50,000 scale) indicates that mudstones, siltstones and sandstones of the Alveley Member are present to the north-east of Alveley Farm (Survey Field 1). The Client Formation, consisting of breccia, sandstone and mudstone, is mapped to the north-west of the farm (Survey Field 2). Roughly north-south bands of sandstone and conglomerate of the Enville Member are marked along the western scheme route (Survey Fields 3 & 4). No superficial geology is mapped within the scheme area.

# **2. Planning Policies and Guidance**

## **2.1 National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. This document sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Key policies concerning archaeology and cultural heritage are summarised below.

### *The Requirement for Heritage Assessments:*

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. (Paragraph 128)

### *Assessment of Impact upon Heritage Assets:*

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a

heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. (Paragraph 129)

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. (Paragraph 132)

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. (Paragraph 134)

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. (Paragraph 135)

## **2.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

A schedule has been kept since 1982 of monuments considered to be of national importance. These sites are legally protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Sites identified as a scheduled monument are designated by the Secretary of State. Consent must be obtained from the Secretary of State for any works which affect a scheduled monument. Historic England advises the Government on sites in England that should be included on the Schedule and on individual cases for Scheduled Monument Consent.

## **2.3 Listed Buildings**

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport holds a List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest considered to be of national historical or architectural importance. The list is compiled under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 on advice from Historic England.

Listed Building Consent is required from Historic England prior to any works being carried out on a Grade I or II\* listed property or structure. Listed Building Consent is required from the Local Planning Authority prior to any works being carried out on a Grade II listed property or structure. A listed building refers to the exterior and interior of the property/structure as well as any additional objects or structures within the curtilage of the building.

## **2.4 Conservation Areas**

A Conservation Area is an area considered worthy of preservation or enhancement because of its special architectural or historic interest, "the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Sections 69 and 70). Conservation Areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings, and all features within the area, listed or otherwise, are recognised as part of its character.

## **2.5 Historic Hedgerows**

Hedgerows of historical and ecological and landscape value are protected by law under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997). The regulations protect important hedgerows through a system of notification to the local planning authority (LPA). Advice regarding the provisions of the regulations is given in 'The Hedgerow Regulations – A Guide to the Law and Good Practice'. The LPA must be given 42 days notice of the intention to remove a countryside hedgerow. If a hedgerow is deemed to be important under criteria outlined in Section 7 of Hedgerows Legislation Guide, the LPA have powers to serve a Hedgerow Retention Notice, requiring that the hedgerow is preserved.

## **2.6 Registered Parks and Gardens**

Historic England holds a Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. These Registered landscapes are graded I, II\* or II, and include private gardens, public parks and other green spaces. Registration is a material consideration in planning terms, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the special character of the landscape.

## **2.7 Registered Battlefields**

Historic England holds a Register of Historic Battlefields. Unlike Listed Buildings and the Register of Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields are not currently graded as a means of ascribing relative significance. Registration is a material consideration in planning terms, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the special character of the landscape.

# **3. Methodology**

## **3.1 Introduction**

The assessment has been carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014)*.

## **3.2 Aims**

The assessment is intended to identify the extent and character of the known and potential archaeological resource and provide an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on potential archaeological remains within the development area.

## **3.3 Study Area**

The archaeological and historic records have been considered within a Study Area defined by a 500m buffer zone around the proposed route of the high voltage cable and associated substation.

## **3.4 Resources**

*Historic England*

- List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest
- List of Scheduled Monuments

- Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest
- Register of Battlefields
- National Record of the Historic Environment

*Shropshire Historic Environment Record*

- Historic Environment Records of Archaeological Sites, Monuments and Finds
- Published & Unpublished Reports
- Historic Landscape Characterisation Maps
- Aerial Photographs

*Shropshire Archives: Shrewsbury Records Office*

- Historic Maps & Documents
- County Histories and other Secondary Sources

*Online Databases*

- Heritage Gateway
- Portable Antiquities Scheme
- Archaeology Data Service
- The National Archives

### **3.5 Walkover Survey**

This involved walking systematically over the proposed development area. The aims of the site survey were:

- To assess the present condition of the known heritage assets identified through the assessment;
- To identify heritage assets not included on the HER;
- To assess the proposed development area for its potential to contain buried archaeological remains;
- To assess the visual impact of the scheme upon significant heritage assets in the surrounding landscape.

## **4. Results of the Assessment**

### **4.1 Introduction**

There are fourteen heritage assets and eight field observations recorded on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) within 500m of the proposed development (Figs.3). Each site has been referenced by a Primary Record Number (PRN) allocated by Shropshire Council. The HER records include a listed buildings that is also recorded on the National Heritage List for England.

Additional archaeological sites and monuments have been considered beyond the intensive study area in order to compare sites and finds located at a similar topographic location as the proposed development as well as to more fully assess the potential for archaeological remains within the application area.

## 4.2 The Historic Landscape

The scheme route is situated within the landscape characterised as Timbered Plateau Farmlands. The rolling topography is typically dissected by valleys. Farming tends to be mixed, with pasture dominant where the terrain makes the land difficult to cultivate.

The settlement pattern is defined by dispersed farms, wayside cottages and hamlets, with some small villages. Small open fields existed around many of the hamlets and villages in the medieval period. These had largely been enclosed through piecemeal agreements by the seventeenth century.

Much of the land beyond the open fields was enclosed directly from woodland or common rough pasture in the medieval period. This creates a field pattern of irregular hedged enclosures, winding lanes and scattered farmsteads. Wooded stream valleys are a particular characteristic of this landscape. This is a medium-scale landscape, with filtered or framed views with visually prominent hedges and hedgerow trees.

## 4.3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

The nearest scheduled monument, Pool Hall, is located to the south of Alveley, about 1.9km south-south-west of the development site. The scheduled area (List No: 1019833) encompasses a well-preserved medieval moat with an eighteenth century brick-built house of three storeys. This site is considered to be the centre of the manor of Alveley, which in 1562 was split between Humphrey Grove, Thomas Throckmorton and Margaret his wife. On the death of his father, half of the manor passed to John Grove, who may have obtained sole ownership of the manor in 1594.

There are no other scheduled monuments recorded on the National Heritage List for England within 2km of the proposed development.

## 4.4 Listed Buildings

Four Grade II listed buildings are located within 1km of the proposed substation; Coton Hall and an associated chapel are situated to the north, whilst the dwelling St Peters Finger and the Squirrel Inn are located at Birdsgreen hamlet, to the south-west of the development site.

### *St Peters Finger*

St Peters Finger (PRN: 12015) comprises a seventeenth century timber-framed house located at Birdsgreen, some 550m to the south-west of the development site. The structure has brick infill and brick chimney stacks. This building has one storey and an attic. The roof is tiled. The front has three casement windows and a later bow window to the ground floor with glazing bars. There are three gabled dormers. St Peters Finger is recorded as a Grade II listed building on the National Heritage List for England (List No: 1053770).

### *Coton Hall and Chapel*

Coton Hall (PRN: 11425) is a stucco-rendered Georgian-style house of the early nineteenth century. The porch features four classical columns. The construction is of ashlar, with stone chimney stacks. The hall is of two storeys. The entrance hall has fluted Doric columns. An Italianate wing with a tower was added around 1860. Coton Hall is recorded as a Grade II listed building on the National Heritage List for England (List No: 1053229). This is the ancestral home of the Lee family.

The chapel (PRN: 11426) at Coton Hall dates from around 1760. This structure is built in stone in a mixture of Classical and Gothic idioms. Only ruins remain of the chapel (which has no roof). The east window is Venetian in style, with an ogee centre light. The west and lateral windows are pointed. There is a Quatrefoil opening in west gable and remains of moulded plaster work in a splay of the west window. The baluster shaft of the font dates from the eighteenth century. Coton Chapel is recorded as Grade II listed on the National Heritage List for England (List No: 1053229).

The hall and chapel are located approximately 750m north of proposed substation. The hall was once surrounded by extensive parkland that extended southwards to Batfield Lane. The landscaped park is now confined to the north of Coton Dingle.

#### *The Squirrel Inn*

The Squirrel Inn (PRN: 11424) dates from the early nineteenth century. This listed building is constructed in colour-washed brick with end chimney stacks and a slate roof. The first floor windows have moulded lintels and keyblocks. There are two canted bays on the ground floor. The porch has a projecting cornice hood on fluted cast iron columns. The Squirrel Inn is recorded as a Grade II listed building on the National Heritage List for England (List No: 1053228). This property is located some 800m south-west of proposed substation.

### **4.5 Conservation Areas**

Alveley Conservation Area was designated on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1978 by Shropshire County Council (subsequently, Shropshire Council). This was extended on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The historic settlement core encompasses the medieval Church of St Mary and a number of post-medieval buildings to the south, along Church Road, as well the 'The Old Vicarage' to the west. The proposed substation is located some 1.6km to the north-east of the conservation area.

### **4.6 Historic Hedgerows**

The route for the high voltage cable traverses hedgerows either side of the farm access track, between Fields 1&2; these boundaries are shown on the estate plan of 1819 but not the 1770 survey. The eastern end of the route traverses a single hedgerow along the northern boundary of the solar farm; this field boundary is not shown on the 1770 map. The western route traverses historic boundaries between Fields 2&3 and 3&4; these boundaries are shown on the estate plan of 1819 but not the 1770 map.

### **4.7 Registered Parks and Gardens**

There are no registered parks or gardens recorded within 3km of the proposed substation compound. However, it should be noted that the parkland at Coton Hall (discussed below) formerly extended southwards towards Batfield Lane, adjacent to the development site.

### **4.8 Registered Battlefields**

There are no registered battlefields reported within 3km of the proposed scheme.

### **4.9 Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

#### *Prehistoric (circa 700,000 BP – circa AD 53)*

There are no open-landscape Palaeolithic findspots (*circa 700,000 BP – circa 10,000 BP*) reported in the locality. However, a number of Mesolithic flints (*circa 8,000 BC (10,000 BP)*)

– *circa* 4000 BC) have been found in this area, associated with semi-permanent occupation along the Severn Valley. Four Mesolithic flints and one core were identified whilst field-walking at Greenhouse Farm in 1971-1973 (PRN: 01346); these were found a few hundred metres to the north of Allum Bridge, some 450m west-north-west of the proposed substation. A possible Mesolithic scraper is recorded at New Barns Farm (PRN: 01347). In addition, two flint flakes dating to this period have been found to the south of Moor House Farms (PRN: 01336 & 03556). An unspecified number of flints were found on the same farm between 1971 and 1973.

A Neolithic (*circa* 4000 – *circa* 2300 BC) polished stone axe was reputedly found in 1919 in a quarry to the south of Alveley, on Butts Farm (PRN: 03222). Other prehistoric finds from Alveley parish significantly include a Bronze Age Palstave (*circa* 2300 – *circa* 700 BC), found by metal detector in 1992 at Tuckhill (PRN: 04544). This is described as an Acton Park type G Anglo-Welsh palstave. The findspot is located approximately 1.5km north-east of Astley Farm. There are no Iron Age (*circa* 700 BC – AD 43) sites or stray finds reported in the study area.

Other prehistoric artefacts identified within Alveley Parish include flints discovered at Allum Bridge (PRN: 00293). This may indicate that similar finds may be encountered at the western end of the proposed scheme.

#### *Roman (AD 43 – circa AD 410)*

In 1984, two Roman coins were found by metal detector at Coton Dingle (PRN: 03902). These comprised a silver denarius of Vespasian and a coin of Gallienus. The findspots are approximately 400m to the west of the proposed substation development. Other Roman finds include a sherd of pottery, possibly Roman, found in 1971 to the north-east of Alveley, at Moor House Farms (PRN: 01336). The stray finds are generally indicative of Romano-British settlement in the locality.

#### *Saxon / Early Medieval (circa AD 410 – AD 1086) & Medieval (1086 – 1536)*

The archaeological record indicates that a medieval mill (PRN: 08053) was formerly located within the Dingle some 600m south of Astley Farmhouse. This is documented as Grantham's Mill and is the most likely site of the Domesday mill at Astley. In 1291, John de Astley granted Hugh Solrugg, clerk, and Aveline his wife, at a rent of fourteen shillings, the mill 'Grantham Hulme and its proper water called Grantham Brook'. Along this watercourse there is a well-defined leat leading to the site of an overshot wheel. The brook has been straightened about 50m downstream from the remains of the post-medieval mill. The 1291 name (hulme may be interpreted as 'island') may suggest that the mill originally stood further downstream from this overshot wheel. The mill is last mentioned in records in 1587 and appears to have been abandoned by the late 1700s.

The moat (PRN: 02822) situated to the south-west of Lanegreen Farm represents the most significant medieval site recorded within the study area. Here, a rectangular moat defines an island which measures approximately 22m by 28m. The moat arms, some 6m to 9m wide, are visible as shallow depressions up to 0.5m deep. On the north-west side there are the remains of an internal bank. Adjoining the moat to the north is a shallow rectangular depression measuring about 20m by 30m; this feature appears to be the infilled remains of a fishpond. There is another pond close to the south-east corner of the moat, which may also have served as a fishpond. The medieval moat is positioned to the north of the proposed solar park and over 250m to the east of the route for the high-voltage cable.

In 1976, a number of medieval artefacts were retrieved near Allum Bridge (PRN: 00293). The finds comprise an iron arrowhead, part of a hand quern, glazed pottery, sherds of coarse-ware

and a cut-penny of Richard II (1377-99). The finds may relate to this fording point of the river or indicate settlement in the near vicinity. This was formerly the crossing point along the route from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth; from 1760 the upkeep of this road was the responsibility of the Kidderminster Turnpike Trust. In the 1820s this road was replaced by a new turnpike to the west, now the A442.

There is further evidence for medieval occupation at Astley Farm, within the central scheme area. This is the possible location of a deserted medieval settlement (PRN: 01288). However, there are no visible earthworks in the fields surrounding the house. It is possible that these have been obscured or destroyed by the construction of modern agricultural buildings.

#### *Post-Medieval (1536 – 1899)*

The parkland (PRN: 07516) associated with Coton Hall (PRN: 11425) is shown on the early OS maps extending southwards from the hall, beyond Coton Dingle. On the County Editions, Batfield Lane, to the north of the proposed scheme, marks the southern boundary of the landscaped park. The parkland most probably dates from the mid eighteenth century (Parks and Gardens UK Ref: 5246). At the start of the nineteenth century the estate covered some 5,000 acres. By 1827 (Greenwood map) the tree-lined Coton Dingle ran up the centre of the park. Other parkland features include Coton Dingle Pond (PRN: 03443). The pond is not depicted on the estate map of 1770 although other ponds along the Dingle are marked. Coton Dingle Pond is first shown on an estate map of 1819. Field observation in 1979 by Ordnance Survey (PRN: ESA 3115) recorded an earthen dam at this location, forming a pond bay 27m long, 12m wide and 2.4m high. The purpose of this feature is uncertain, but it may have retained a supply pond.

Allum Bridge Mill (PRN: 15718) is documented at Alveley from the seventeenth century onwards. The earliest record, in 1635, records the transfer of a lease of 'New Mill' by Francis Baskerville to his sister Margaret Pountney, the unexpired residue of his lease of a half share in the water corn mill called 'New Mill'. The ownership of the mill can be traced from this date to the present day. In 1770, the mill had one wheel and two sets of stones. There was a building next to the pool; probably the house of the miller. By 1864, this structure appeared to encompass a stable, cow house, barn and pig sty. The same source suggests that the mill was 15 feet square. There were major extensions to the mill before 1881/2. A photograph of about 1900 shows a large stone building which also served as a shop and warehouse for Robert Clarke, the owner, who was a miller, grocer, baker and flour merchant. The mill remained intact until the 1960s when it was converted into a hotel. The pool was directly on the brook, with the mill located underneath the dam. The post-medieval mill is located some 300m to the south-west of the proposed substation.

Two post-medieval farm buildings were identified within the study; Astley Farm (PRN: 25846) and Allum Bridge Farm (PRN: 25845). These have been recorded by the Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project (PRN: ESA 6427). Astley Farm (PRN: 25846) is described as having a regular courtyard plan. Allum Bridge Farm (PRN: 25845) is recorded as having a loose courtyard form, with farm buildings on one side of the yard. Both farms have been dated to the nineteenth century, although Astley Farm appears to be older as this is shown on an estate map of 1770.

Other features shown on early OS maps include small extraction pits near Astley Farm (PRN: 30090) and Filletts (PRN: 30091). Neither feature is positioned within 200m of the scheme route. Another extraction pit was identified on the site of the proposed substation. This pit is possibly illustrated on the 1819 estate map and is described as 'gravel pits' on the County Editions.

#### **4.12 Map Regression**

##### *Plans of the Coton Estate 1770 & 1819 (Figs. 4, 5 & 6)*

The scheme area is shown in detail on two maps of the Coton Estate dating from 1770 and 1819. The intricate pattern of comparatively small fields evident on the 1770 survey is indicative of late medieval enclosure of former common fields. Particularly noticeable is the sinuous boundaries of many of the fields surrounding Astley. There also appear to be a number of structures illustrated to the north of the main house, noted as 'Astley Hall' on the field map taken from the 1770 survey. Only two main building groups are depicted on the 1819 plan. The drawings also show that a considerable number of smaller enclosures appear to have been consolidated into larger fields between 1770 and 1819.

##### *25 Inch Map 1883-1884 & 6 Inch Map 1891-92 (Fig. 7)*

The general form and layout of structures shown at Astley Farm on the 1819 map is repeated on the first edition county Edition of 1884. The field pattern is also comparatively unchanged. Notable features on the first edition include the gravel pits marked along Batfield Lane towards the western end of the proposed scheme. Allum Bridge Mill and associated mill pond are clearly marked along the Bowhill Brook.

##### *25 Inch Map 1903 & 6 Inch 1904-1904 (Fig. 8)*

No changes within the scheme area were noted on this map.

##### *25 Inch Map 1926 & 6 Inch Map 1938*

The gravel pit at the site of the proposed substation is marked as disused on this edition. There are otherwise no changes noted within the study area.

##### *1:10,560 map of 1954*

No significant changes within the scheme area were noted on this map.

##### *1:2,500 survey of 1960-61*

No significant changes within the scheme area were noted on this map.

##### *1:10,560 map of 1966-70*

No significant changes within the scheme area were noted on this map.

##### *1:10,000 map of 1971*

On this map, the present extent of woodland is shown to the west of Astley Farm, extending perpendicular to Batfield Lane. This is unaltered on the current OS edition.

On this edition, Allum Bridge Mill appears to have been converted to a hotel. This is located to the south of the proposed scheme route.

#### **4.13 Aerial Photographs**

There are aerial photographs available from the Aerofilm Collection. These comprise oblique shots of Coton Dingle taken on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949. No cropmarks were identified from these photographs within the scheme area. There is no coverage of the scheme route on the

Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs. Additionally, no potential features were identified from modern aerial images from Google and Bing Maps.

#### **4.14 Results of the Site Visit & Visual Impact Analysis (Plates 1-12)**

A site visit was conducted on the 24th June 2015 in dry and bright conditions. All four fields were walked over and inspected for potential archaeological sites (Fig.2). All fields were under crop (wheat) and so any possible crop-marks or artefact scatters were not seen. No earthworks or any other features of archaeological interest were identified during the site visit.

Particular note was made of the views outward from the proposed site of the substation toward known heritage assets (Fig.3) in order to the visual impact of the scheme. The proposed development site is situated within disused gravels pits located along the north-west boundary of Field 4. From this position, only one designated heritage asset was assessed to be within the zone of theoretical visibility of the substation. The Grade II listed seventeenth century dwelling, St Peters Fingers, potentially has a view of the substation compound from an elevated position within Birdsgreen hamlet. This building is located some 550m from the development site. There are possibly other historic buildings within Birdsgreen that have a theoretical view of the site, but these assets seems to be screened from the site by intervening buildings. From this location, it is not possible to Coton Hall and the surrounding parkland, or Astley Farm, due to the intervening local topography.

During the visit it was noted that the former gravel pits had been backfilled and the ground levelled. The perimeter of this extraction area was noted as substantially overgrown along the southern-east and north-east sides. There were also trees along this boundary as well as a substantial hedge. The only view of the wider landscape from the substation compound was to the south-west. In this respect, the visual impact of the development upon the wider historic landscape is considered to be negligible.

## **5. Conclusions**

Analysis of the archaeological record indicates there is a generally low potential for archaeological features and deposits along the route of the proposed high voltage cable. The likely presence of medieval occupation sites in the vicinity of Astley Farm is however uncertain. The scheme route deviates northwards around the mapped area of the farm buildings shown on the estate map of 1770 and all subsequent surveys.

The results of the visual impact analysis indicate that the general development area can be seen from only a limited number of heritage assets. The Grade II listed St Peters Finger has a potential view towards the proposed substation compound. However, the impact on the extended setting of this asset is negligible. The proposed location of the substation compound, set back into the former quarry, affords substantial screening of potential views from historic buildings in Birdsgreen hamlet and generally screens the development from the wider historic landscape.

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Ordnance Survey	1891-1892	Scale: 1:10,560 (6 inches to 1 mile). <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1903	Scale: 1:2,500 (25 inches to 1 mile). <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1903-1904	Scale: 1:10,560 (6 inches to 1 mile). <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1926	Scale: 1:2,500 (25 inches to 1 mile). <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1928	Scale: 1:10,560 (6 inches to 1 mile). <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1954	Scale: 1:10,560. <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1960-61	Scale: 1:2,500. <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1970	Scale: 1:10,560. <i>Promap</i>
Ordnance Survey	1980	Scale: 1:10,000. <i>Promap</i>

### **Vertical Aerial Photographs (Digital Imagery)**

Bing Maps © Microsoft Corporation, HERE, 2015  
<http://www.bing.com/maps/>. Accessed 01/6/15

Google Maps © Bluesky, Infoterra Ltd, Digital Globe, Getmapping Plc, 2015  
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### **Oblique Aerial Photographs (Film)**

*Aerofilms Collection:*

EAW 024600 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949  
EAW 024601 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949  
EAW 026431 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949  
EAW 026432 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949  
EAW 026433 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949  
EAW 026434 11<sup>th</sup> July 1949

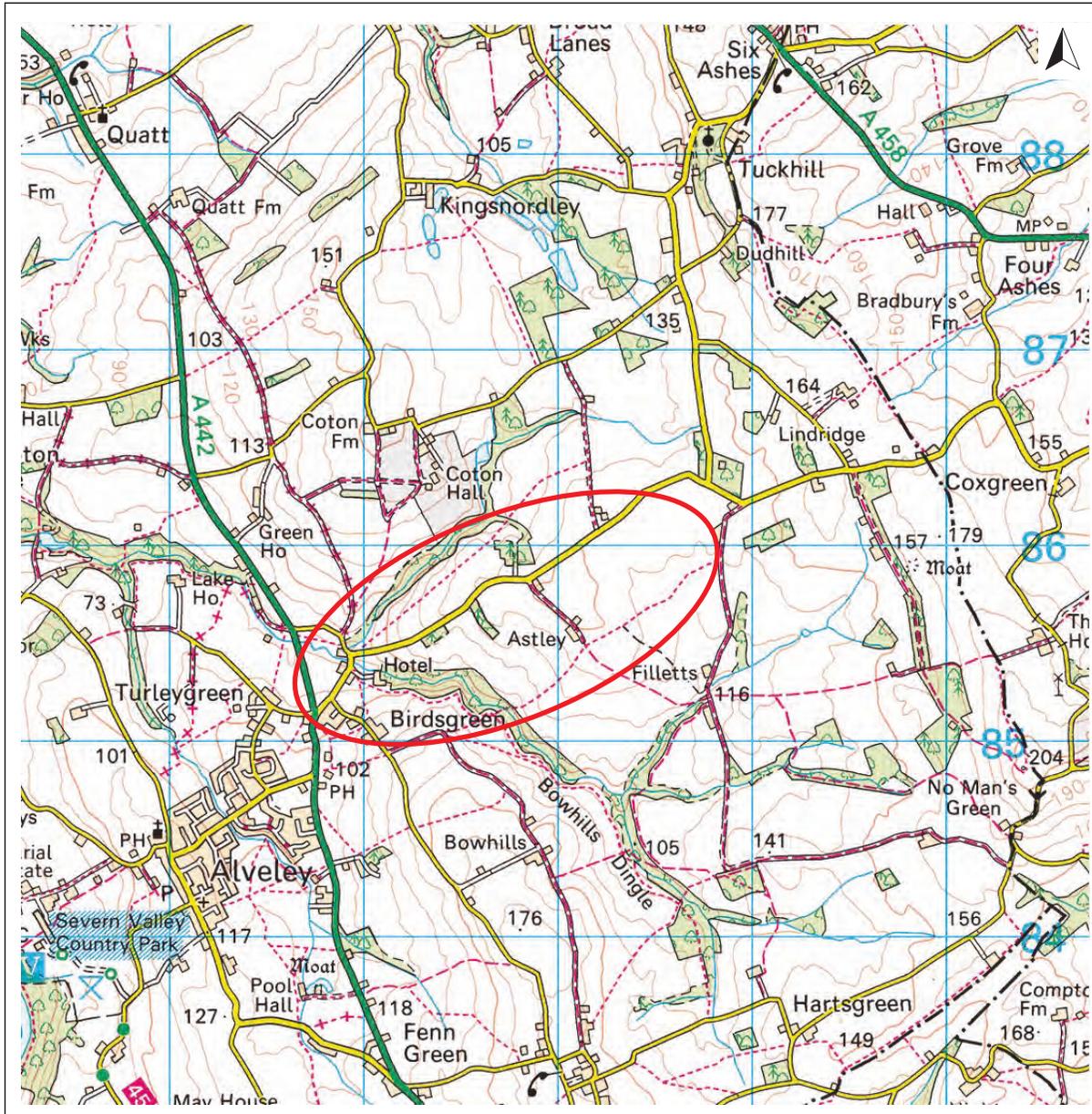
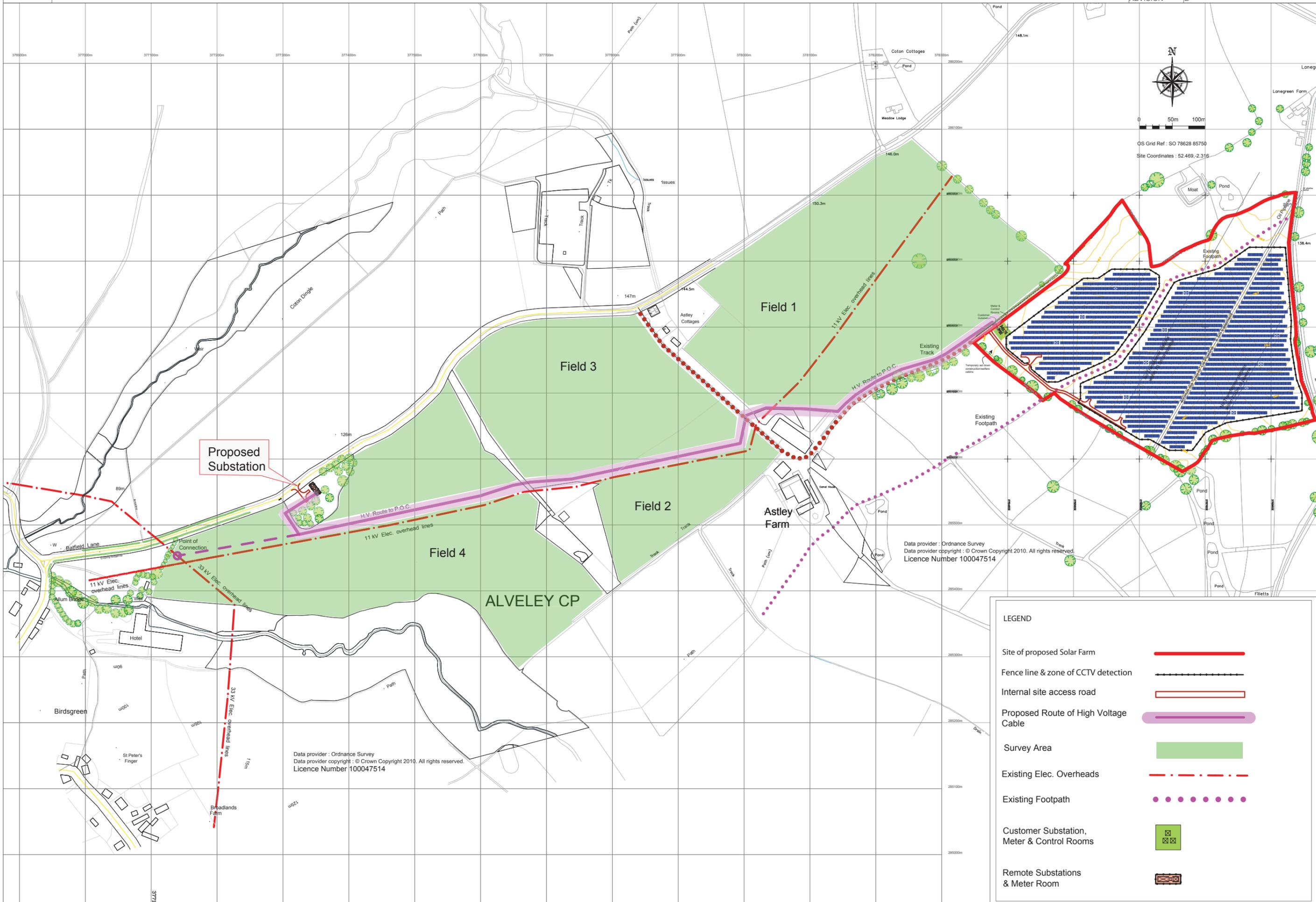


Figure 1.  
Location map  
showing Scheme  
Area



**LEGEND**

- Site of proposed Solar Farm
- Fence line & zone of CCTV detection
- Internal site access road
- Proposed Route of High Voltage Cable
- Survey Area
- Existing Elec. Overheads
- Existing Footpath
- Customer Substation, Meter & Control Rooms
- Remote Substations & Meter Room

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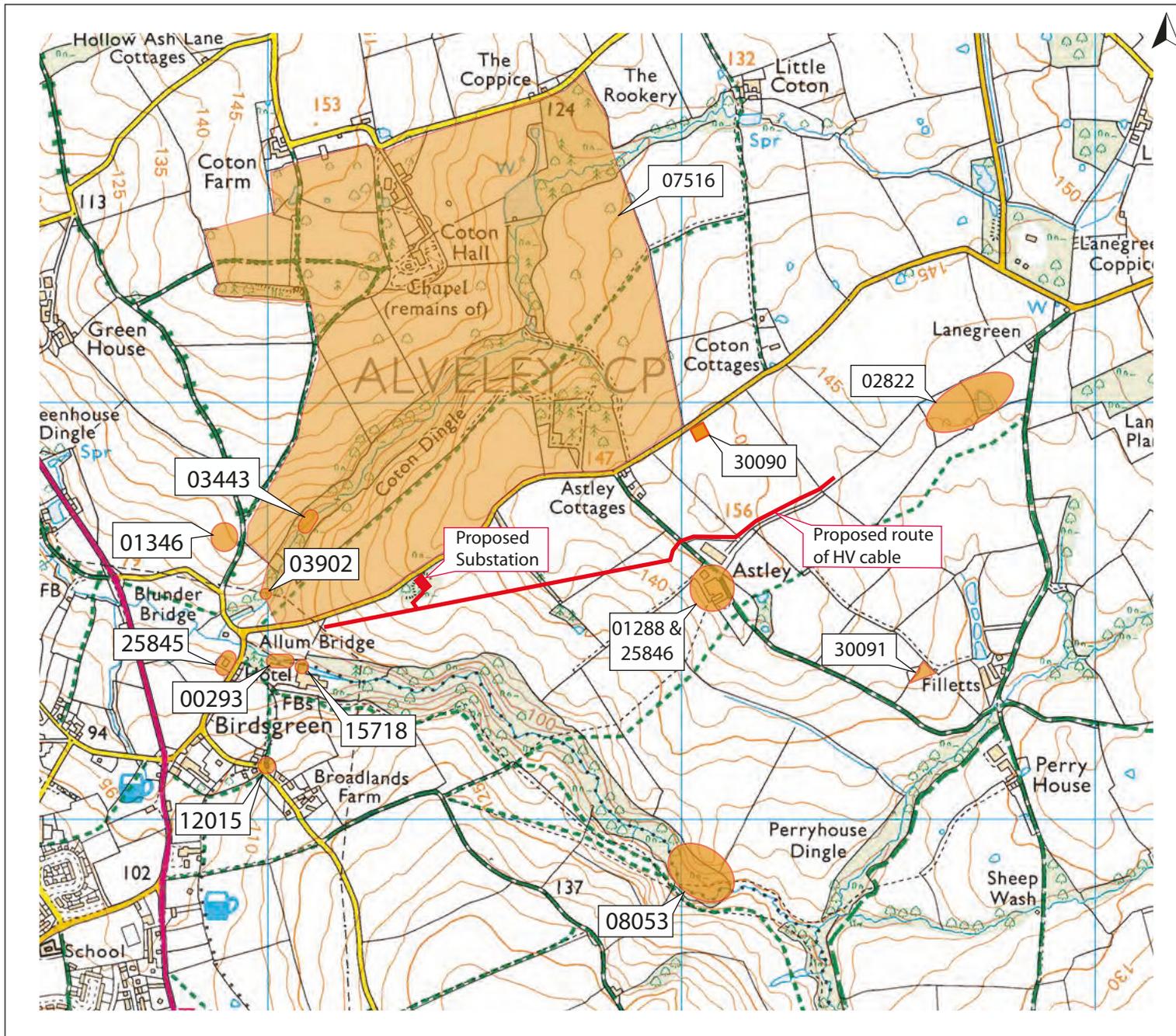
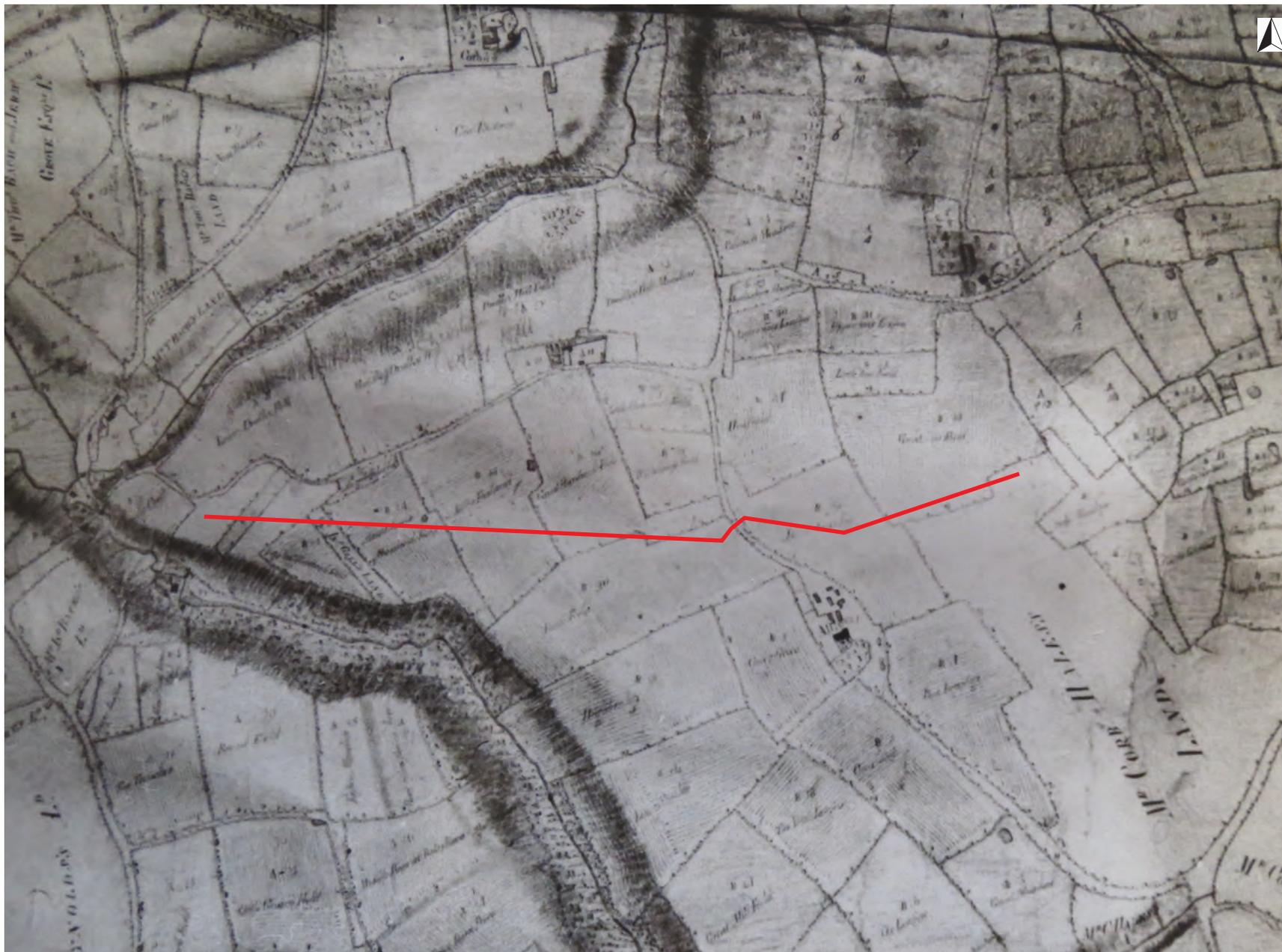


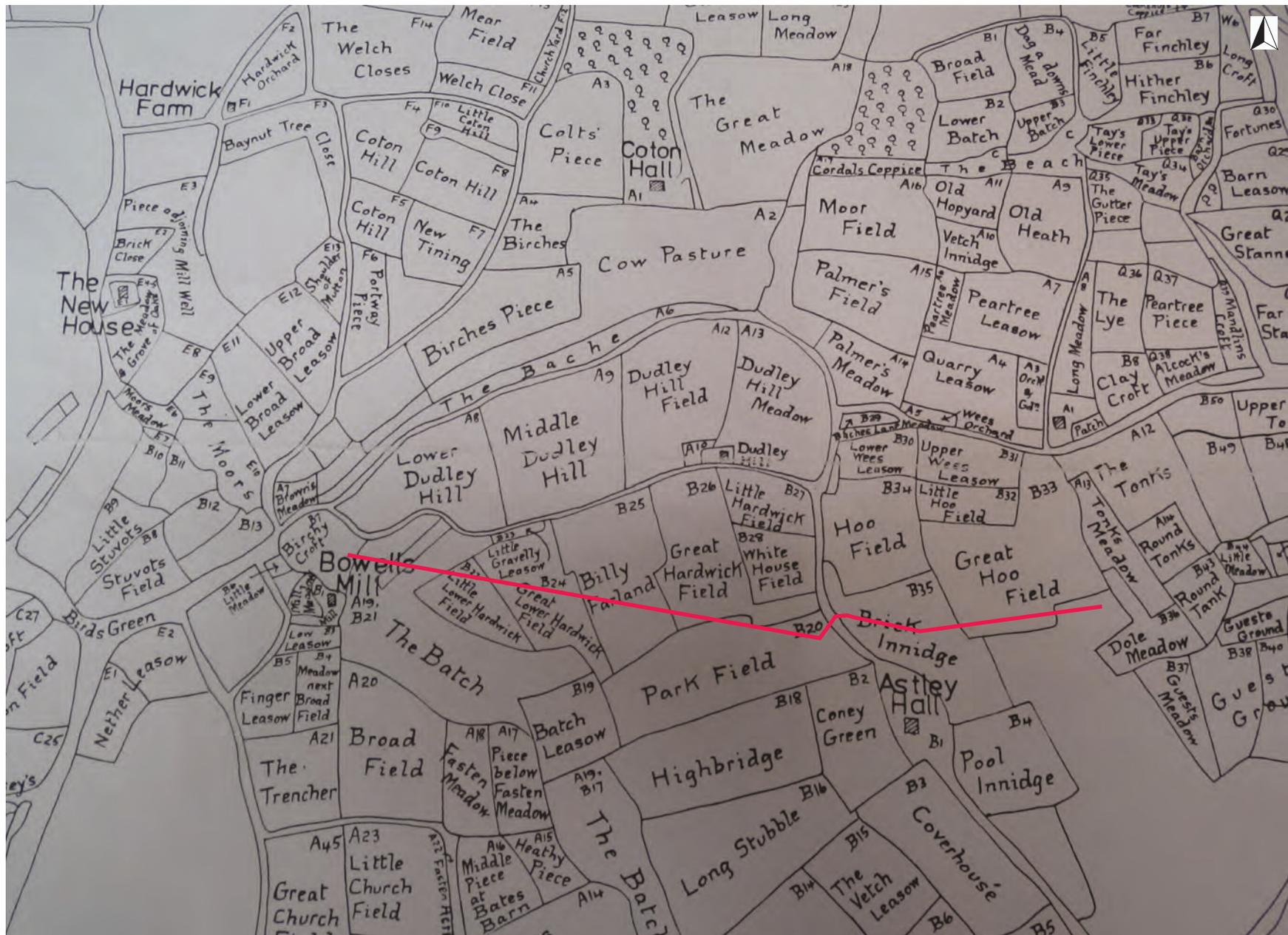
Figure 3.  
Map of heritage assets located within a 500m buffer zone



Proposed route  
of HV cable

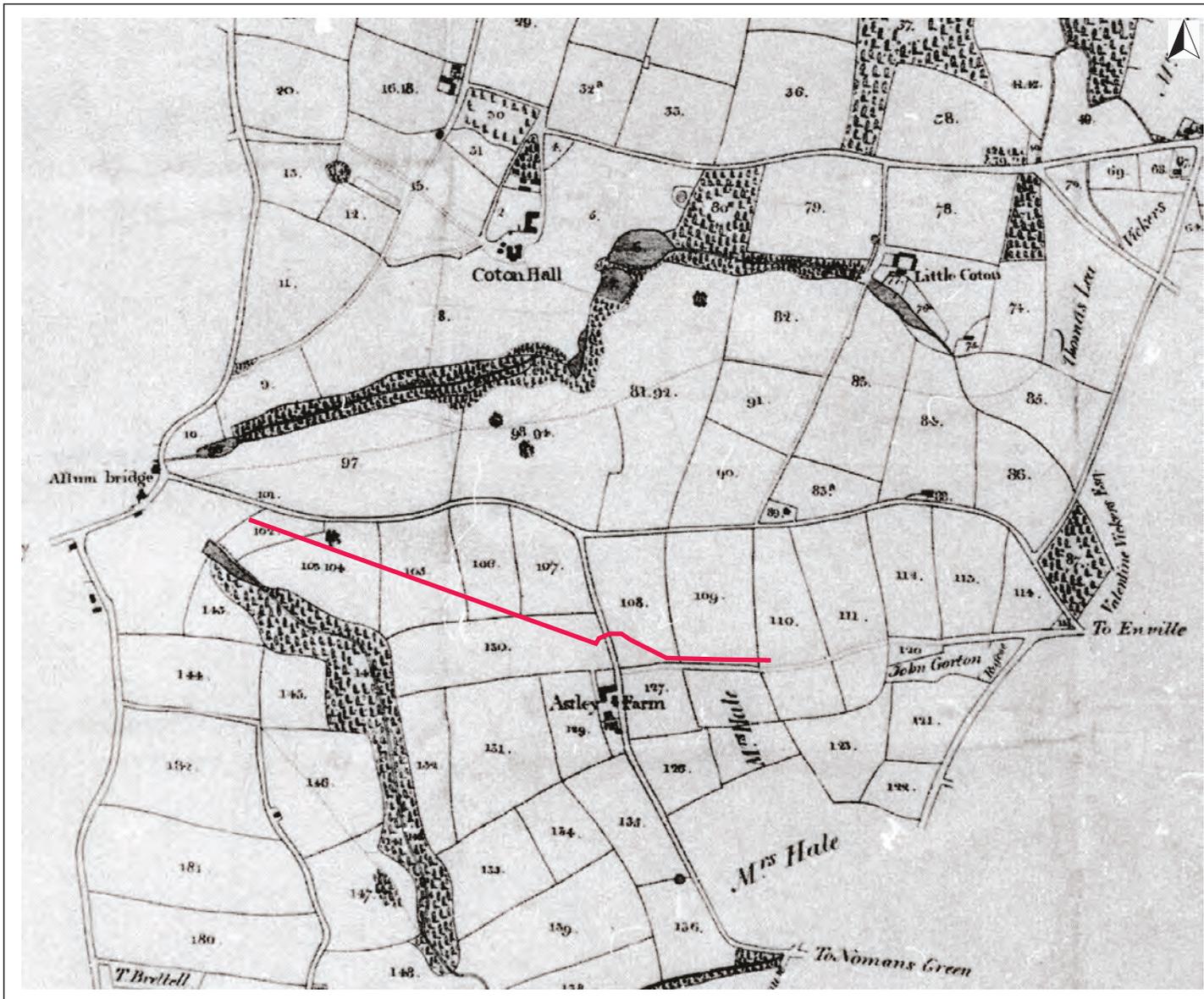


Figure 4.  
1770 Survey of the  
estates of Lancelot Lee,  
Esq



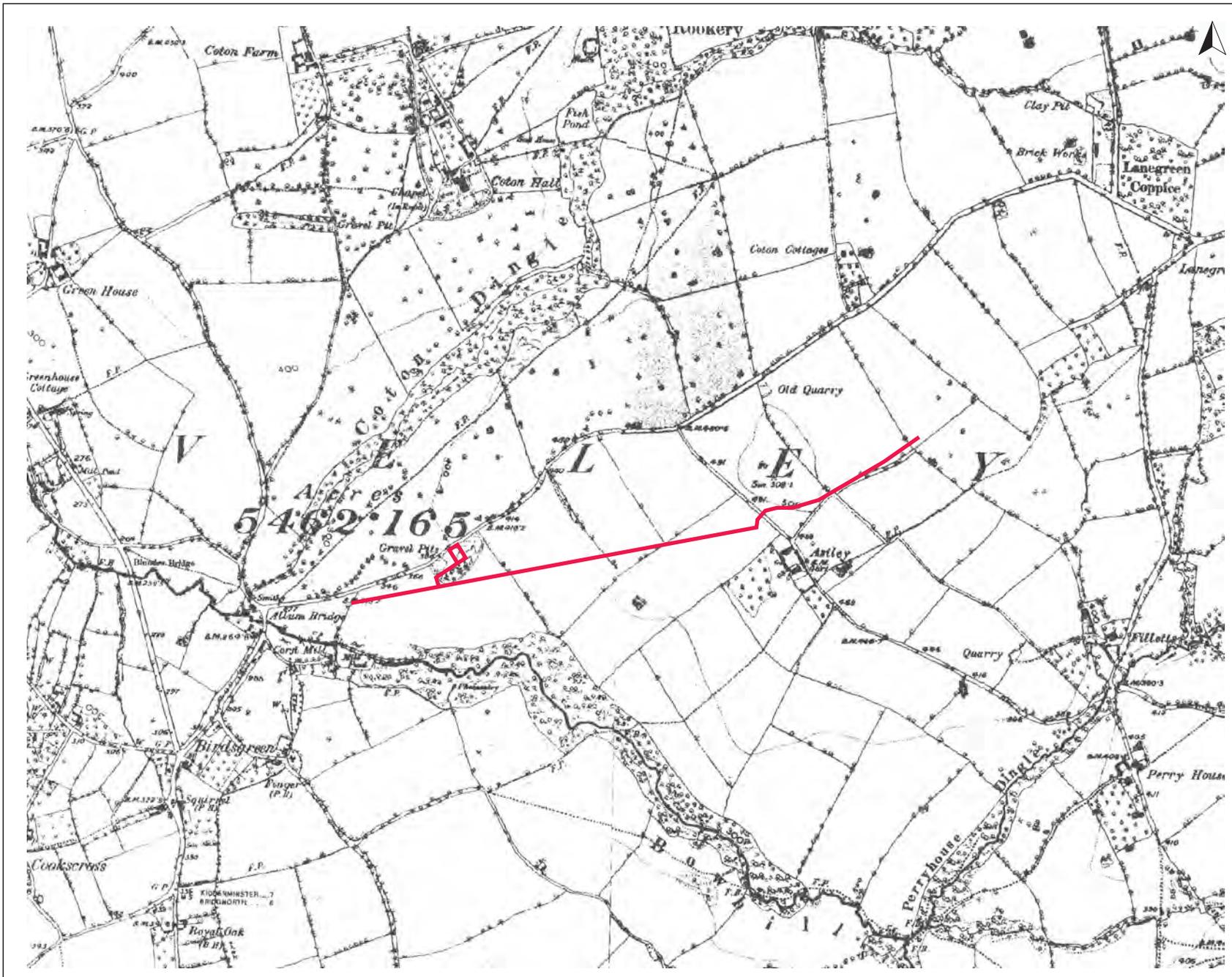
Proposed route of HV cable

Figure 5. Scheme route (approx.) on drawing of 1770 map



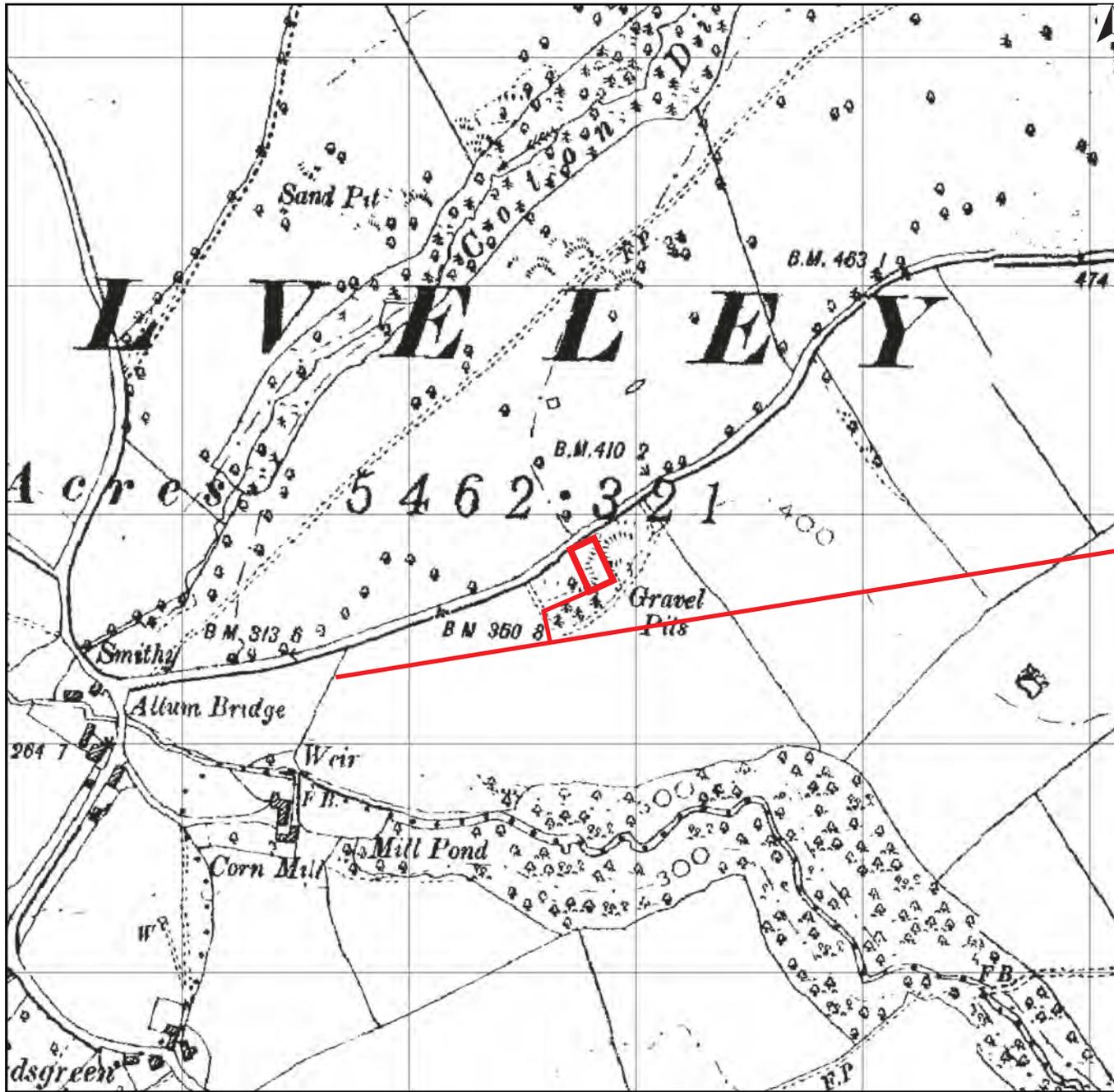
Proposed route  
of HV cable

Figure 6.  
Scheme route (approx.)  
on the Coton Estate  
1819 map



Proposed route  
of HV cable &  
Substation

Figure 7.  
Scheme route (approx.)  
on the Ordnance  
Survey Map 1891-1892



Proposed route  
of HV cable &  
Substation

Continues

Figure 8.  
Scheme route (approx.)  
on the Ordnance  
Survey map 1903-1904



Plate 1 - General view of Astley Farm from the west



Plate 2 - View from the south-west corner of Field 1 - looking east



Plate 3 - View along the south-east boundary of Field 1 - looking east-north-east



Plate 4 - View mid way along the south-east boundary of Field 1 - looking east-north-east



Plate 5 - View mid way along the south-east boundary of Field 1 - looking west-south-west



Plate 6 - View from the eastern corner of Field 2 - looking west-south-west



Plate 7 - View from the south-west boundary of Field 3 - looking east-north-east



Plate 8 - View from the south-west boundary of Field 3 - looking north-east



Plate 9 - View from the north-east boundary of Field 4 - looking west-south-west



Plate 10 - View from the western end of Field 4 - looking east-north-east



Plate 11 - View of overgrown quarry within Field 4 - looking north-east



Plate 12 - General view of Birdsgreen hamlet from the disused quarry in Field 4 - looking south-west

# Archaeology Wales



**Archaeology Wales Limited**

Rhos Helyg, Cwm Belan, Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6QF

**Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371**

Email: [admin@arch-wales.co.uk](mailto:admin@arch-wales.co.uk)

Company Directors: Mark Houlston MIFA & Jill Houlston  
Company Registered No. 7440770 (England & Wales).  
Registered office: Morgan Griffiths LLP, Cross Chambers,  
9 High Street, Newtown, Powys, SY16 2NY